

# UNCLASSIFIED

AD NUMBER
ADB006176
NEW LIMITATION CHANGE
TO Approved for public release, distribution unlimited
FROM Distribution authorized to U.S. Gov't. agencies only; Proprietary Information; 06 JUN 1975. Other requests shall be referred to Army Command and General Staff College, Fort Leavenworth, KS 66027.
AUTHORITY
ODDR&E ltr, 20 Jan 1976

THIS PAGE IS UNCLASSIFIED

THIS REPORT HAS BEEN DELIMITED  
AND CLEARED FOR PUBLIC RELEASE  
UNDER DOD DIRECTIVE 5200.20 AND  
NO RESTRICTIONS ARE IMPOSED UPON  
ITS USE AND DISCLOSURE,

DISTRIBUTION STATEMENT A

APPROVED FOR PUBLIC RELEASE;  
DISTRIBUTION UNLIMITED,

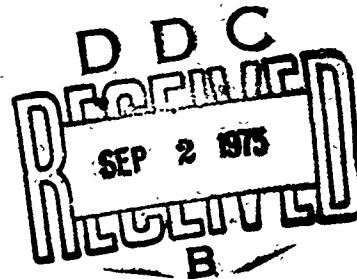
**L**

**ADB006176**

The Sixteen Division Force: Anatomy of a Decision

Creighton W. Abrams, Jr., MAJ, USA  
U.S. Army Command and General Staff College  
Fort Leavenworth, Kansas 66027

Final report 6 June 1975



2 SEP 1975

Distribution limited to U.S. Government agencies only; proprietary information. Other requests for this document must be referred to U.S. Army Command and General Staff College, ATTN: ATSW-DD, Fort Leavenworth, Kansas 66027. **A**

A thesis presented to the faculty of the U.S. Army Command and General Staff College, Fort Leavenworth, Kansas 66027

Unclassified

SECURITY CLASSIFICATION OF THIS PAGE (When Data Entered)

REPORT DOCUMENTATION PAGE		READ INSTRUCTIONS BEFORE COMPLETING FORM
1. REPORT NUMBER	2. GOVT ACCESSION NO.	3. RECIPIENT'S CATALOG NUMBER
4. TITLE (and Subtitle) The Sixteen Division Force: Anatomy of a Decision		5. TYPE OF REPORT & PERIOD COVERED Final report 6 Jun 75
		6. PERFORMING ORG. REPORT NUMBER
7. AUTHOR(s) Abrams, Creighton W., Jr., MAJ, USA		8. CONTRACT OR GRANT NUMBER(s)
9. PERFORMING ORGANIZATION NAME AND ADDRESS Student at the U.S. Army Command and General Staff College, Fort Leavenworth, Kansas 66027		10. PROGRAM ELEMENT, PROJECT, TASK AREA & WORK UNIT NUMBERS
11. CONTROLLING OFFICE NAME AND ADDRESS US Army Command and General Staff College ATTN: ATSW-DD Fort Leavenworth, Kansas 66027		12. REPORT DATE 6 Jun 75
		13. NUMBER OF PAGES 58
14. MONITORING AGENCY NAME & ADDRESS (if different from Controlling Office)		15. SECURITY CLASS. (of this report)  Unclassified
		15a. DECLASSIFICATION/DOWNGRADING SCHEDULE
16. DISTRIBUTION STATEMENT (of this Report) Distribution limited to U.S. Government agencies only: Proprietary Information. Other requests for this document must be referred to U.S. Army Command and General Staff College, Fort Leavenworth, Kansas 66027.		
17. DISTRIBUTION STATEMENT (of the abstract entered in Block 20, if different from Report)		
18. SUPPLEMENTARY NOTES Master of Military Art and Science (MMAS) Thesis prepared at CGSC in partial fulfillment of the Masters Program requirements, U.S. Army Command and General Staff College, Fort Leavenworth, Kansas 66027		
19. KEY WORDS (Continue on reverse side if necessary and identify by block number)		
20. ABSTRACT (Continue on reverse side if necessary and identify by block number) See reverse.		

Unclassified

SECURITY CLASSIFICATION OF THIS PAGE(When Data Entered)

The sixteen division force decision is analyzed primarily from the military perspective of its originator, General Abrams. However, the perspectives of the Congress, of the Secretary of Defense and the Secretary of the Army, and of the Army staff planners who must make that decision work were also vital aspects of the decision and are accordingly analyzed.

The factor of troops available, or the tactical and managerial consequences of the decision, is internally the most visible one because it means that the Army must restructure its assets and manage them more intensively than ever before. Essentially, as the Army Chief of Staff General Weyand has stated, it means "finding new ways of doing business." It also means that, because the restructuring has been speeded up by the August 1974 Nunn Amendment, trying to attain sixteen divisions by the end of FY 1976 will cause short term degradation of Army readiness. Tactically, the force will be lighter, but, because of this, it will also get to the fight sooner.

There are some short-term risks in readiness attendant to attaining sixteen divisions quickly without increasing the end strength of the Army. Nevertheless, by taking that initiative, the Army has re-established its credibility with the Congress, which has already responded by, for the first time in five years, not reducing the Army's end strength, has reoriented the Army internally toward more intensive management of its assets, as well as toward its primary mission of fighting, and has provided a signal to adversaries and allies alike that there is an irreducible minimum to American resolve.

Unclassified

SECURITY CLASSIFICATION OF THIS PAGE(When Data Entered)

THE SIXTEEN DIVISION FORCE

ANATOMY OF A DECISION

A thesis presented to the Faculty of the U.S. Army  
Command and General Staff College in partial  
fulfillment of the requirements of the  
degree

MASTER OF MILITARY ART AND SCIENCE

by

CREIGHTON W. ABRAMS, JR, MAJ, USA  
A.B., Princeton University, 1962

Fort Leavenworth, Kansas  
1975

## ABSTRACT

The sixteen division force decision is analyzed primarily from the military perspective of its originator, General Abrams. However, the perspectives of the Congress, of the Secretary of Defense and the Secretary of the Army, and of the Army staff planners who must make that decision work were also vital aspects of the decision and are accordingly analyzed.

The significance of the sixteen division force decision, which was broached to Congress in early 1974 and presented as a programmed force in the February 1975 budgetary request for FY 1976, lies in the fact that the Army is asking to increase its number of divisions from thirteen to sixteen without requesting an increase in its end strength of 785,000. The last time the Army had sixteen divisions was in 1964, when the end strength was 969,000, almost 200,000 more than now. The decision is therefore part of the impetus for a major restructuring of the Army which will produce more combat units, fewer support units, and fewer headquarters. The "tooth-to-tail" is being adjusted in favor of the "tooth."

The basis for the decision was not a carefully worked out staff study, but rather an estimate of the situation--roughly analogous to a commander's use of the factors of METT (mission, enemy, terrain and weather, troops available). The factors of mission and enemy, or the strategic response of general purpose forces (primarily ground forces) to a given threat, are derived from considerations of the Soviet military evolution since World War II, the

perception that the American role in Southeast Asia was less than satisfactory, and the implications of those two factors for all contingencies, but particularly for the primary one, NATO. Essentially, the Soviets have achieved nuclear parity to a degree which undercuts any American option to escalate from ground combat to a tactical or strategic nuclear "solution." More reliance is therefore placed on being able to control a conventional attack with conventional ground forces, forces in which the Soviets are clearly superior in the NATO arena. The "trip-wire" strategy, if it existed, does no longer.

NATO is the basis for ground forces sizing and planning because of its value and because of the very clear threat of Soviet and other Warsaw Pact nations in the European theatre. American ground forces are planned on the basis of being able to respond simultaneously to this major threat as well as to one minor one. Steady Soviet improvements over the last ten years in quality and quantity of ground forces and the American drawdown from Vietnam have degraded the military balance to an extent which requires a clear signal by us that the drawdown is over. The increasing multipolarity of the international arena also increases the likelihood of using the three new divisions in response to a minor contingency.

The terrain and weather, the political constraints, which were analyzed before deciding to attain sixteen divisions without increasing the end strength of 785,000, were chiefly two. The first was that 785,000 was about all that the traffic would bear: it was what the Army thought it could recruit into an all-volunteer force; and it was seen as all the Congress would let them recruit. The second constraint was strong Congressional concern that the Army, which was



v

thought to be primarily a "labor-intensive" force, was too support-heavy, too much involved with equipment, particularly in research and development. This acted as a constraint because it made one option, that of converting the Army to a more equipment and support-oriented, "capital-intensive" force less viable. Congress, it was felt, simply would not support this option without making drastic reductions in manpower. These fiscal "savings," however, would not be put back into the capital, or support structure.

The factor of troops available, or the tactical and managerial consequences of the decision, is internally the most visible one because it means that the Army must restructure its assets and manage them more intensively than ever before. Essentially, as the Army Chief of Staff General Weyand has stated, it means "finding new ways of doing business." It also means that, because the restructuring has been speeded up by the August 1974 Nunn Amendment, trying to attain sixteen divisions by the end of FY 1976 will cause short term degradation of Army readiness. Tactically, the force will be lighter, but, because of this, it will also get to the fight sooner.

There are some short-term risks in readiness attendant to attaining sixteen divisions quickly without increasing the end strength of the Army. Nevertheless, by taking that initiative, the Army has re-established its credibility with the Congress, which has already responded by, for the first time in five years, not reducing the Army's end strength, has reoriented the Army internally toward more intensive management of its assets, as well as toward its primary mission of fighting, and has provided a signal to adversaries and allies alike that there is an irreducible minimum to American resolve.

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

	Page
ABSTRACT	iii
Chapter	
1. INTRODUCTION: THE SIGNIFICANCE OF THE DECISION . . . . .	1
2. ENEMY AND MISSION: STRATEGIC THREAT AND RESPONSE . . . . .	10
3. TERRAIN AND WEATHER: THE CONSTRAINTS . . . . .	22
4. TROOPS AVAILABLE: MANAGERIAL AND TACTICAL CONSEQUENCES OF THE DECISION . . . . .	31
5. ASSESSMENT . . . . .	44
BIBLIOGRAPHY . . . . .	54

## CHAPTER I

### INTRODUCTION: THE SIGNIFICANCE OF THE DECISION

The decision by the US Army's leadership to increase the number of active Army divisions from 13 to 16 without increasing the manpower ceiling of 785,000 was broached to Congress in a deceptively simple manner. In March of 1974 the Army Chief of Staff, General Abrams, who in earlier testimony had stated that 14 divisions was the goal, responded to a later question about the sufficiency of the Army budget by stating that actually his "personal goal is that we have an Army of 16 divisions plus 8 Reserve Component divisions, and we are headed in that direction."<sup>1</sup> The two most vital aspects of this statement were that no additional manpower was requested--and the response it produced from the Congress. A year later a document developed to be presented to Congress for the FY 1976 budget referred to that earlier Congressional response:

The key point we made then was that we could not create needed additional combat structure if Army manpower was reduced by Congressional action. We therefore specifically requested Congress not to cut Army manpower for FY 75, and, for the first time in five years, the Congress did not do so.<sup>2</sup>

In retrospect the thinking of the Army's leaders is clear: although an end strength of 785,000 could almost certainly not be increased,

---

<sup>1</sup>U.S., Congress, House, Subcommittee of the Committee on Appropriations, Department of Defense Appropriations for 1975, Hearing, 93d Congress, 2d Sess., 5 March 74, (Washington: Government Printing Office, 1974), p. 610.

<sup>2</sup>Department of the Army, "The Army of 1976: An Explanation of the Army's New Force Initiatives and the Budgetary Implications for FY 76," (Congressional briefing document), 18 February 75, p. 5.

it would be worthwhile to try to insure that it remained stable.

Once made, the decision to attain 16 divisions without increasing the manpower of the Army produced a variety of studies from the Army staff, some to examine how to accomplish this feat, some to consider disadvantages in implementing it, and some to elaborate even further on why it is going to be good for the Army. We shall examine the results of some of those studies, if only to gain an appreciation of the complexity of the decision, but we should not lose sight of the fact that, for the most part, those studies did not lead to the decision; but rather flowed from it. Ultimately, they are an articulation and refinement of a decision which was made from an estimate of situation, rather than from a thoroughly analyzed and staffed plan.

In a very rough way, the factors which led to the decision were not unlike those considered by any military leader--the factors of METT (mission, enemy, terrain and weather, and troops available). Mission and enemy, or our response to a given threat, are considered by force planners annually in a variety of documents (two of the most notable are the Joint Strategic Objectives Plan and the Five Year Defense Program) which are articulated annually before Congressional committees. We shall examine portions of the two most recent and comprehensive of the unclassified documents, the Annual Defense Department Reports for FY 1975 and 1976 by James R. Schlesinger, because they are the most relevant and also the clearest enumerations of the threat and of what is needed to respond to it. The next factor to consider, terrain and weather, will be dealt with as constraints, that is, as those factors which are controlled by the will of the

American people as reflected in the Congress and the civilian leadership of the Department of the Army and of the Department of Defense. Terrain can be analyzed, and, although the most recent winds seem capricious, climatic conditions over a longer period can also be gauged with reasonable accuracy. The point to recognize is that terrain and weather, constraints, are not the enemy, and that, if they seem not to be amenable to one's concept of operation, then it is very possible that the concept is wrong. In any case, advantage can and should be taken of favorable terrain and wind directions. The ~~final~~ factor of troops available is normally given; the planner need only consider whether those troops are adequate to support the plan. In the case of the decision to attain 16 divisions within a given manpower ceiling of 785,000, the number of troops available was also taken as unchangeable, but it will also be worthwhile to examine why this was so. In other words, why was there no effort to ask Congress for more manpower? Or alternatively, if the Army's leaders were operating under a definite budgetary constraint, why did they not ask to trade some of their expensive manpower (in an all-volunteer force) for additional weapons by reducing the end strength and/or the number of divisions?

That the 16 division force decision was a significant departure from previous approaches to force development can be understood in relation to an alternative answer to this last question about the correct end strength for a given number of divisions. In point of fact, many officers serving on the Army Staff were caught by surprise when they learned that General Abrams had told Congress that he intended to attain 16 divisions (without increasing manpower).

Their expectations were similar to those articulated by Zeb B. Bradford, Jr and Frederic J. Brown, two career combat arms officers, who argue in their book, US Army in Transition, for "capital intensification" of the Army. That is, they feel that increased weaponry and equipment will reduce casualties, which are particularly important in an all-volunteer, American Army, and be more combat effective. Pointing out that the "division slice" (Army end strength divided by the number of active divisions) increases in wartime because increased "tail" (support) has consistently proven its combat utility, they assert that, were the Army to have an end strength of 762,000, the optimum number of divisions would be 11.<sup>3</sup> The projected division slice (785,000/16) for the 16 division force, on the other hand, is 49,000, the smallest since 1950, pre-Korea, when the Army was little more than cadre force. Further, if each of the 16 divisions were part of a complete Division Force Equivalent (one division of 16,000 + one initial support increment of 16,000 + one sustaining support increment--for more than sixty days of combat--of 16,000) of 48,000, there would be little left for the CONUS materiel and training base, to say nothing of the Department of the Army Staff. As it turns out, the Division Force Equivalent is only a planning figure. The bulk of the support increments, 26 out of 40, are actually Reserve Component units, and even some of the active Army divisions will be partly composed of affiliated reserve brigades and battalions. Nevertheless, 16 divisions within

---

<sup>3</sup>Bradford and Brown, US Army in Transition (Beverly Hills: Sage Publications, 1973), p. 160. Their argument for capital intensification is contained in Chapter 8.

an end strength of 785,000 is a major new direction for Army force planners. The last time the Army had 16 divisions was in 1964, right before Vietnam, and then we had an end strength of 969,000, almost 200,000 more than now.

It is not just the surprise of the Army Staff, however, which underlines the almost radical nature of the decision; one can also see its significance in the consequences which are already apparent. The decision is strategically important, for example, not because of an increase from 13 to 16 divisions (the Soviets have many more), but because it is an increase and because the American Army is doing it. The Soviets will no doubt notice that the American drawdown from Vietnam is now over. Three new divisions are tactically important because they change our options on how we will fight and with what chance of success. Because the relative amount of combat support available for the initial battle is lessened, this too will have a bearing on the conduct of the first battle. For the logistical and operational planner alike it becomes a question of how much of the Division Force Equivalent do we really need for the initial stages of combat, before those support increments in the reserves can be activated and deployed. Thus was the US Army Concepts Analysis Agency tasked to make a "Reevaluation of the 48,000 Structure Allocation Planning Factor Associated with the Division Force Equivalent Concept" in 1974.

The greatest consequence of the decision, however, is its impact on how the Army manages its assets, particularly its people. Rank structure has been and will continue to be affected, particularly in the corps of officers. Military Occupational Specialties will

be affected as support spaces are converted to combat spaces--this has already had a tremendous impact on American Army forces deployed in Europe. Headquarters have been eliminated or reduced to make more combat spaces. In effect, it is the tooth-to-tail which is being adjusted, in favor of the tooth. This is having an effect on how the Army sees itself, but, more importantly, it is having an effect on how Congress and the Department of Defense see it.

It is the thesis of this study that how the Army manages its assets is not only the consequence but largely the cause of the decision to attain 16 divisions with only 785,000 manpower. Clearly, in an all-volunteer force which has achieved a degree of pay comparability to a relatively affluent civilian sector, the most important fiscal asset is the people. General Abrams was often heard to say, "People are not in the Army, they are the Army." For the most part this view was shared by the Congress and the civilian leadership of the Department of Defense, particularly after Secretary Schlesinger arrived. What they perceived, however, was an Army which needed to be less concerned with weaponry and more concerned with managing (structuring) its people. Further, Army emphasis was perceived to be on development as opposed to procurement.<sup>4</sup> \$2½ billion has not, for example, produced a usable new main battle tank, a fact which was explored, along with the advisability of de-emphasizing the tank on future battlefields, on a recent television

---

<sup>4</sup>Statement by James R. Schlesinger in a personal interview (all references to that interview have been cleared by the Office of the Secretary of Defense), 18 April 75. More precisely, Secretary Schlesinger stated that the Army has had a tendency not to procure equipment which is easily maintainable, resulting in the need for excessive logistical support.



5  
documentary.

This attitude toward the Army's development and procurement programs is not unlike that expressed in a recent Forbes magazine review of the findings of the Army Materiel Acquisition Review Committee (AM/RC):

What the US Army has preferred, it seems, is to make its own decisions: The Sheridan tank's \$1.5-billion guns blew up; there was the \$500-million-plus MBT-70 tank--a "strategic mistake;" and Army experts paid \$60 million for 60 atomic cannons, 57 of which "were sold for junk."

Today the Defense Department spends \$81 billion annually, and almost 25% of that on new weapons development. What's really new is not that the Army spends much of this weapons system money badly, but that it has found a way to admit it. Naturally there is a reason.

Cost-conscious Congress, a jaundiced public, a tight domestic economic situation and the Army's own history of waste have forced the Army's Vietnam war policy of "minimum candor" into a peacetime cash-short policy of "maximum mea culpa."

.....

. . . Then, like the Russian, French and Israelis, "Go for evolutionary weapons systems, not revolutionary ones." By this the committee means take something that is already proven, and improve on it. . . .

This differs from the Army's old "Silver Bullet Syndrome,"-- buying new weapons just because they cost more. (Or, as GIs used to say: "If it won't go, chromium-plate it.")<sup>6</sup>

The point is not that the Army should not have funds for Research and Development, nor even that past funds have been grossly mismanaged, but rather it is that the suppliers of those funds perceive that they have, in part, been used wastefully. Their perception of 16 divisions, on the other hand, is one of efficient management of the real assets

---

<sup>5</sup>CBS, 60 Minutes, 30 March 75.

<sup>6</sup>Forbes, "What Every GI Secretly Suspected," 15 September 74, p. 66.

of the Army. This is different from an earlier perception of an Army which was thought to be hesitant about becoming all-volunteer. To borrow a very much overworked word, credibility was being re-established.

The decision to attain 16 divisions can therefore be seen as a desire by the Army's leadership to retain as much of its budget share and manpower as it could, as well as to manage those assets as efficiently as possible. There are many good reasons for re-configuring this way, as there should be, but the basic rationale was to reverse a trend delineated by Secretary Schlesinger:

One choice is to continue to review the Administration's budget and make cuts in such a way that the net reduction is no more than 5% of the total. Consciences are then salved and no great damage is done in any particular year. The difficulty is that if this approach is followed year after year--as it has been in the recent past--the real military power of the defense establishment must inevitably erode. And as troublesome as the fact of erosion is, the fact [remains] that decisions fundamental to the security of the United States are made by default. Surely, if we want the shadow rather than the substance of first-class military power, we should make the decision explicitly rather than in a casual and impulsive fashion over a period of time.<sup>7</sup>

In another part of his report Secretary Schlesinger states that "Despite our hopes for detente and an end to the cold war, we have been driven out of the Paradise of isolation and noninvolvement which characterized the America of the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries." In 1953 when the Joint Chiefs of Staff were told that no longer would they consider "purely military factors, they were now instructed to treat the economy itself as a relevant aspect of

---

<sup>7</sup>James R. Schlesinger, Annual Defense Department Report, FY 1976 and FY 1977 (Washington Dept of Defense, 5 Feb 75), p. I-2.

<sup>8</sup>Ibid., p. I-7.

national security,"<sup>9</sup> military leaders were also driven from non-involvement with the tides of national priorities. They were to learn that "that which purifies us is trial, and trial is by what<sup>10</sup> is contrary."

---

<sup>9</sup>David W. Tarr, American Strategy in the Nuclear Age, (London: The Macmillan Co, 1966), p. 62.

<sup>10</sup>John Milton, Areopagitica, The Portable Milton, edited by Douglas Bush (New York: The Viking Press, Inc., 1949), p. 167.

## CHAPTER II

## ENEMY AND MISSION: STRATEGIC THREAT AND RESPONSE

During the period following his conversion to a rather unique form of Chirstianity, Leo Tolstoy wrote a kind of moral fable, entitled "How Much Is Enough?" about a man who endlessly sought to obtain more land. He finally found a district which had good land for the asking; all that he had to do was walk all the way around whatever he wanted between sunrise and sunset of a single day. Because the man's need for land was derived from his need for security, it was insatiable, and he died trying to walk around too large a piece of land--but not before realizing that this one great appetite had narrowly circumscribed how he had lived and how he would die. This dilemma of trying to find enough security without having it become the only reason for existence has especially dominated the decision-makers of the only two post-World War II nations, the United States and the USSR, which have really had a choice. The Soviets' situation is more readily identifiable with that of Tolstoy's protagonist because of Russia's historical need for buffer states--as well as their efforts to obtain them--and because of their current East European hegemony. This pushing outward to dominate the Eurasian heartland is perhaps the clearest evidence of the compatibility of Russian communism with Russia's historical memory. If Lenin's theories about capitalist imperialism have any validity, however, the Americans have also sought to expand their economic influence

with almost bearlike ferocity, if Canada's current efforts toward partial disengagement are any indication. Both sides, moreover, have demonstrated their awareness that territory and the ability to occupy it with ground forces are vital to their sense of security.

At the core of the security sufficiency dilemma, it should be noted however, is the evolution of American and Soviet strategic nuclear strategy since 1945. Until Sputnik I was launched in 1957, our sense of sufficiency was amply fulfilled. Even after the Russians had acquired the weapon, we were sure of our superiority. From 1957 until the early sixties, however, we were concerned with a missile-gap and the possibility that we were vulnerable to pre-emptive attack. After the missile-gap was discovered by Robert McNamara's Department of Defense to be nonexistent and after we developed the Polaris submarine and hardened ICBM silos, we sought to attain a rational solution to the problem of nuclear sufficiency. Our policy became one of establishing an inventory of weapons adequate to survive a first strike and to mount a retaliatory strike which would punish the USSR industry and population sufficiently to make our capability to do so a viable deterrent. The number of weapons required to punish the USSR could be arrived at fairly accurately, and, because this number was not dependent upon how many weapons the Soviets possessed, we seemed to have arrived at a rational solution of mutually assured destruction (in such MADness is divinest sense),.

Because deterrence depends on what the Soviets perceive to be our capability as well as our will to employ it, however, our strategic nuclear policy since 1969 has been somewhat open-ended. The tendency to want to make sure that the Soviets know that we

can and will do what we are capable of has been further exacerbated by the Soviets' constant improvement of their own capability--almost as if they did not understand that enough was enough. Even the recent Vladivostok accords have done little to assuage our fear that rationality is not working out. The Soviets, on the other hand, must have acquired by now a genuine sense of having caught up, of having achieved nuclear parity with the Americans.

The result of the Soviets' perception of nuclear parity is analogous to that of the Egyptians achieving air parity (with their air defense) in the 1973 October War. Having neutralized an air force which once had dominated the Mideast battlefield, they were encouraged to exploit any ground force advantage they might have as a result of their surprise attack. If the Soviets have achieved nuclear and air parity in the NATO arena, then their tremendous preponderance of ground power (in tanks, BMP's, artillery, and divisions) becomes more exploitable. At the very least this potential lowers the threshold for the employment of tactical nuclear weapons, and fighting the Soviets in a tactical nuclear arena (on German turf) would be a little like wrestling with a pig--he does not mind how dirty things get.

If the Soviet planners understand all of this, then they must be watching our conventional ground force structure very closely, particularly since our drawdown from Vietnam. As General Weyand, Army Chief of Staff, has recently stated in his Posture Statement to Congress, in the last six or seven years our momentum has slowed while the Soviets' has increased.<sup>1</sup> Certainly our deterrent value,

---

<sup>1</sup>Chief of Staff Posture Statement for FY 1976, Feb, 75.

our assurance to our allies, and our freedom to act unilaterally have been eroded. It was, after all, Stalin who is reputed to have asked, "How many divisions does the Pope have?" It may not therefore be prudent to assume that American divisions in Europe can be used simply as a trip-wire for American nuclear might. What is valid and can reverse the trend is an action which would increase the perceived strength of American ground forces, particularly if part of that increase could be sent to Europe.

President Kennedy was the most recent American leader who sought to change the Soviet perception of American strength and will. His motive was derived from his experience with Khrushchev in Vienna in 1961: "If he thinks I'm inexperienced and have no guts, until we remove those ideas we won't get anywhere with him. So we have to act."<sup>2</sup> His action was to increase the military budget and to send another division to Europe. This was also the origin of the strategy of flexible response. Halberstam points out that Secretary of Defense McNamara, in seeking to control the use of nuclear weapons by diminishing their importance, advocated an argument not unlike that now being used:

It would be one of the smaller ironies of his years as Secretary of Defense that in making his arguments against nuclear weapons, forcefully, relentlessly, he had to make counter-arguments for conventional forces, to build up those conventional forces. We had to have some kind of armed might, so he made good and effective arguments for conventional weapons (and if the Chiefs wanted to use them in Vietnam, to send American combat troops without nuclear weapons, he had to go along, since he had developed the thesis, the mystique of what conventional weapons could do with the new mobility). He gave them a rationale, for his overriding concern was quickly to limit the possibilities

---

<sup>2</sup>David Halberstam, The Best and the Brightest (Greenwich: Fawcett Crest, 1972), p. 97.

of nuclear war, to gain control of those weapons.

Ten years later a new Secretary of Defense has advanced this rationale:

The allocation of such a large proportion of the Defense budget to general purpose forces may seem perverse in what has come to be known as the nuclear age, but there are a number of powerful reasons for it. With the rise of Soviet nuclear power, which has brought about an approximate parity in U.S.--Soviet nuclear capabilities, the relative contribution to deterrence made by our own strategic forces has inevitably declined, even though these forces continue to have a unique and indispensable role.

In an era of world-wide U.S. interests, power politics and nuclear parity, it is preferable to deter or to repel limited threats by limited means. To do that requires a capability to place boundaries on conflicts and exercise some degree of control over the escalation of violence in the event that deterrence should fail. The general purpose forces, it is generally agreed, are best suited to these purposes.<sup>4</sup>

Like McNamara, Secretary Schlesinger is acutely aware of the problem of sufficiency, except that in the latter's case the political necessity of limiting conventional forces must also be confronted--a problem which is somewhat ameliorated by a changing Sino-Soviet relationship:

While the basic justification for the general purpose forces is generally understood and accepted, it is more difficult to determine the size, composition, and deployment of these forces. This is regrettable but hardly surprising, for the process of establishing requirements (both quantitative and qualitative) does not lend itself to the simple mathematics of the strategic nuclear exchange.

Of course, one way to dispose of the sizing problem is simply to produce a carbon-copy of the main threats. To adopt such a course, however, would impose impossible demands on our resources, overlook the facts of allies and geography, and ignore such phenomena as the Sino-Soviet split. Right now, for example, the USSR deploys nearly a fourth of its ground forces in the vicinity of the PRC's borders; unless the political situation

---

<sup>3</sup>Ibid., p. 297.

<sup>4</sup>James R. Schlesinger, Annual Defense Department Report FY 1975 (Washington: Dept of Defense, 1974), p. 81.



in the Far East changes quite dramatically in the near future, it would be conservative planning at its worst (and most expensive) to count these forces as part of the threat to NATO which would necessitate countervailing forces of our own there.

A more complex but at the same time more practical procedure is to define theaters of vital interest to the United States--theaters such as Europe, the Middle East, Southeast Asia, Korea, Japan, and essential sea lanes-- estimate specific threats that could materialize in these theaters and the contributions of allies, and then determine what forces we should provide to maintain an equilibrium. Once that is done, we can go on to 5 decide how many of these contingencies might arise simultaneously.

There is, in fact, a methodology for determining general purpose forces which is almost as precise as that used for strategic nuclear forces:

To overcome the the drawbacks of capabilities planning, and particularly to keep our force requirements from becoming open-ended, we have developed a planning algorithm which makes the general purpose forces the function of several factors, namely:

- our analysis of the most demanding contingencies that could arise in theaters of primary interest to the United States and the requirements they would levy on allied and U.S. forces;
- a determination of the number of contingencies, considering the international situation, that might occur more or less simultaneously and for which we should have active and reserve forces available;
- the initial strategy that we and our allies should adopt, such as forward defense;
- the length of the initial phase of the conflict and its implications for the mix of active and reserve forces, strategic mobility, anti-submarine warfare (ASW), and logistics.<sup>6</sup>

Perhaps the most vital factor in this planning algorithm was one determined by Melvin Laird, Schlesinger's predecessor (if we omit Elliot Richardson):

In the 1960's as a result of this planning process, we adopted a strategy and force structure that purportedly enabled

---

<sup>5</sup>Ibid., p. 83.

<sup>6</sup>Ibid., p. 84.

us to deal simultaneously with the initial stages of a war in Europe, a war in Asia, and a minor contingency elsewhere. Since 1969, with explicit acknowledgement of the Sino-Soviet split and the President's opening of detailed negotiations with both the USSR and the PRC, the strategic concept has been changed in the following major respects.

We now plan our forces to deal with a major conflict in Europe or Asia and to respond simultaneously to a minor contingency elsewhere. Thus, we have dropped one of the big contingencies for which we must be simultaneously prepared and have adopted, in the jargon, a  $1\frac{1}{2}$  war strategy instead of the  $2\frac{1}{2}$  war strategy of the 1960's.

The change in strategic concept has accompanied the reduction in the baseline general purpose forces. The principal change was the reduction in the number of active Army divisions from 16  $\frac{1}{3}$  in 1964 to 13 in 1973. (Although the number of naval combatants has also declined substantially, the result is more a function of budgetary constraints and the retirement of obsolescent ships than of the change in strategy).

The U.S. withdrawal from Vietnam, the Nixon Doctrine, and the modified strategic concept--accompanied by these reductions in active forces--have led to the recurrent expectations that large savings in the budget for the general purpose forces could be realized. Yet in current dollars, the costs of the reduced general purpose forces have continued to rise. Part of the reason for this seemingly perverse effect is, of course, inflation and the disturbingly rapid increase in the price of new weapons systems. But the most important factor has been the increased cost of manpower as we have adopted pay comparability and phased out the draft. As a consequence, we have to recognize that:

- the general purpose forces tend to be manpower-intensive so that unit costs are bound to be higher than they were a decade ago;
- substantial general purpose forces will nonetheless be required if we are to maintain a worldwide equilibrium and at the same time avoid increased reliance on nuclear weapons;
- even so, we still need to practice greater efficiency in the utilization of the manpower that we acquire.<sup>7</sup>

This line of argument appears to be headed in the direction of fewer, not more divisions, but it actually is an acknowledgement of a policy with which key members of Congress would already be familiar.

---

<sup>7</sup>Ibid., pp. 85-86.

What follows is the crux of Secretary Schlesinger's discussion.

In an honest effort to educate the Congress, he has declassified a significant amount of information about NATO and Warsaw Pact forces so that the threat can be analyzed in detail--as well as how we would respond to it. The two planning contingencies that constitute the main basis for force planning are: "an attack on NATO by the nations of the Warsaw Pact, led by the USSR;" and "an attack in either Northeast or Southeast Asia with the direct involvement of the forces of a major power."<sup>8</sup> These contingencies are used to "provide the principal variables that determine the qualitative aspects of our forces."<sup>9</sup> These variables can be refined even further:

The most demanding feature of the NATO contingency is the potential threat to the Center Region. It creates two sets of risks for the Alliance. The first is the danger of a surprise attack launched by the deployed forces of the Warsaw Pact. The second is the possibility of an assault after a period of mobilization and deployment by the Pact.<sup>10</sup>

The immediate threat of a surprise attack by already deployed forces consists of 58 USSR and Warsaw Pact divisions, which are opposed by 29 NATO divisions (including four US and five French divisions), all of which are substantially larger than the Warsaw Pact divisions. This approximate balance would probably deter but not control an attack:

I am reasonably optimistic about our ability to deter even the largest of these attacks, provided that the Alliance continues with and expands its force improvement programs. As matters now stand, however, the probability of a successful forward defense by conventional means only is lower than I consider prudent. How the Soviet marshals would rate their own chances for a successful attack is uncertain.<sup>11</sup>

---

<sup>8</sup>Ibid., p. 86.    <sup>9</sup>Ibid., p. 87.    <sup>10</sup>Ibid.    <sup>11</sup>Ibid., p. 89.

After analyzing the mobilized or "designated threat" of 80-90 Warsaw Pact divisions, as well as the Flanks of NATO, the possible Asian contingencies, the need for sea control, and the functions of strategic mobility and National Guard and Reserve forces, Secretary Schlesinger reached several conclusions, the last of which suggests that he had 16 divisions on his mind, which he did:

- The general purpose forces will continue to grow in importance as nuclear parity continues.
- We have a minimum of these forces considering the extent of our interests and responsibilities and the capabilities of potential opponents.
- To reduce the force structure further would undermine the stability that comes from a basic equilibrium, and would lower the chances for a more enduring peace.
- We are, however, reassessing the types of forces we have and, in particular, the size and contribution of the support structure, to see whether adjustments can produce a more effective overall force balance with greater combat capability.<sup>12</sup>

This has been a rather exhaustive perusal of Secretary Schlesinger's analysis, but it was done for several good reasons. First of all, it is a concise, coherent explanation of how general purpose force sizing is actually accomplished. In effect, the threat, the strategy, the tactics, and the constraints have been explained. The testimony by General Abrams which follows is not so comprehensive, so Secretary Schlesinger's analysis will therefore serve as a useful background and as a demonstration of the basic agreement between civilian and military leaders about what should be done and why. Secondly, Secretary Schlesinger's declassification of some very useful information--following the example he set as Director of the

---

<sup>12</sup>Ibid., p. 97.

Central Intelligence Agency--validates that planning process and, hopefully, establishes a modicum of credibility for all who testify for the Department of Defense. Finally, Secretary Schlesinger's analysis, particularly his conclusions, lays the groundwork for increasing the number of divisions without increasing the end strength of the Army.

General Abrams' view of the strategic situation was similar to that of the Secretary of Defense, but he was more concerned with its deterioration:

The first of these factors was the world situation after our drawdown in Vietnam. Unlike the euphoria of peace following World War II or the feeling of having showed our allies and adversaries we would not tolerate a Communist takeover of South Korea by force, the negotiated settlement in Vietnam was not a stabilizing influence in the world. The continuing mid-east crisis and the free world growing dependence on oil from that region, the newly developed Soviet capability and willingness to move its ground forces outside of its traditional continental area of interest, and a growing number of other potential trouble spots around the globe, all demanded that the Army be ready to carry out national policy over a wider spectrum than just a NATO/Warsaw Pact war. The Soviets had also made many improvements in the quantity and quality of their forces while our attention was focused on Vietnam. These new realities were laid out in a comprehensive assessment of the world environment, the threat, likely Army missions and resulting force requirements by a team established by Lieutenant General Cowles [the Army Deputy Chief of Staff for Operations] in 1973. That team had several sessions with [General Abrams] during the latter half of 1973 and I am sure those sessions strengthened his belief that our Army forces were too small for the type and number of tasks they might be called upon to perform. Despite the perception of detente, the Soviets had developed the capability of global confrontation against US forces.<sup>13</sup>

When replying to a Congressional inquiry about why he thought 16 divisions were necessary, General Abrams probably recognized that explaining all of his views would be impolitic for a military leader

---

<sup>13</sup>Frederic C. Weyand, unpublished letter (in reply to an inquiry about General Abrams' rationale for a 16 divisions force), 17 April 75.

testifying before a Congressional committee:

It represents the goal of bringing the Army to where it can respond to the kinds of things now visualized in Department of Defense planning, and, response to the kinds of contingency plans, the kinds of deployments that we can realistically be called upon to make if we have to face a war.<sup>14</sup>

The issue was raised again in the afternoon session:

[MR. SIKES]

General Abrams, page 5 of your statement indicates that to assure a high probability of accomplishing our national strategy without using nuclear weapons, we would need on the order of 30 divisions. You are budgeting for 21 1/3 divisions, 13 1/3 active and 8 Reserve Component divisions. No one can predict what the next war will be, but there are many who believe that there is a strong likelihood it will be nonnuclear, despite all that has been said about the use of nuclear weapons. Will the force that will be provided in the fiscal year 1975 budget provide a relatively high probability of accomplishing our national strategy without the requirement to resort to the use of nuclear weapons?

GENERAL ABRAMS. My words in my statement, Mr. Chairman, are that it gives us a marginal chance of succeeding without the use of nuclear weapons.

Let me also say I know that is not a very specific thing. We have played this thing and we feel pretty good. The uncertainties are out this with a force of 30 divisions, in the context of the rest of our Armed Forces and the part they play in it and with the nuclear weapons we have, the main purpose of which is that as long as the other side has tactical nuclear weapons we have to have them to prevent their use, I can only tell you that we spent some 10 or 11 months trying likely scenarios for us with the kinds of missions that we can likely expect. It is my review of that work that has led me to these words in here, a marginal chance of succeeding.

It is really basic, too, sir, to why we will do everything we can in 1975 to get to 14 divisions. Ultimately we want to get to 16. Then, the way we look at it now, I think we will be able to say we have a good chance. That is the role of 16 divisions.

MR. SIKES. I take it your answer is that the Army is not relying on the certainty of a conflict involving nuclear weapons; that you are taking every precaution that you can to be prepared to fight with as much ability as is possible with the force that

---

<sup>14</sup>U.S., Congress, House Subcommittee of the Committee on Appropriations, Op. Cit., p. 610.

is available, regardless of the type of war you find yourselves in.

GENERAL ABRAMS. Yes, Sir.

MR. SIKES. But it would be marginal if it were nonnuclear.

GENERAL ABRAMS. Right.

MR. SIKES. Of course, that is an honest answer. I do not think anyone can quarrel with facts.

GENERAL ABRAMS. As I say, I cannot get it down to some analytical thing. I really do not believe in them anyway, sir. If you said it was a 98 percent chance, that has a connotation of precision, but it is no more precise than the answer I am giving here.<sup>15</sup>

The discussion above is emblematic of the role of the American military planner, particularly in the Army, who is trying to ready himself for combat while the nation is at peace. Clearly, the primary impetus for increasing the number of divisions is the threat, yet there is no question about whether the Army should request more manpower spaces to attain the desired divisional strength. That is really not possible. Six years earlier, in time of war, the Army requested 200,000 more people. It is more than possible that the two requests are related, and that the earlier request, which by its size and timing crushed the capacity of the nation's leaders to respond to the cry for sufficiency, made the later request a necessity.

---

<sup>15</sup>Ibid., pp. 647-648.

## CHAPTER III

## TERRAIN AND WEATHER: THE CONSTRAINTS

The earlier comparison of peacetime constraints (on the Defense Budget and on the active military manpower level) to the effects of terrain and weather on a planned operation was not intended as a demonstration of academic sleight of hand. The military planner or decision-maker finds them remarkably similar, primarily because they often seem to be beyond his control. They are external factors which must be analyzed and considered, but one cannot defeat them as one could an enemy. Some constraints, like terrain, seem fairly definite and unchangeable. Others are more like the weather, definite for only short periods of time, but capable of changing drastically. One can visualize, for example, that, if the drawdown from Vietnam and the inception of the all-volunteer Army were a winter of discontent for the Army force planners, General Westmoreland or General Abrams, like General Patton before them, might have asked the chaplain for better weather in which to unleash those forces lying dormant in the arsenal of democracy. A pessimistic or weak leader might be so exasperated by the constraints placed on the military budget and manpower as to allow them to compromise his plan so that it no longer has a chance of succeeding.

If the national objective of "freedom of action" and its concomitant strategy favor an increase in the number of divisions from 13 to the pre-Vietnam (1964) total of 16, they are not an



adequate rationale to increase the end strength of the active Army. Nor is it enough to point that the Objective Force, a "prudent risk" force considered to be desirable and attainable, but which is not programmed because it has not been approved, of the Joint Strategic Objectives Plan (JSOP) has been 16 divisions for several years. Nor is it enough to show that Soviet ground forces have increased steadily since 1964, and that the qualitative improvements of their equipment, as displayed by Egypt and Syria in the October War of 1973, have significantly diminished our technological edge. In fact, the juxtaposition of that exhaustively analyzed event, which has produced numerous reappraisals of weapons and forces, with our own desire to "Come Home, America," has undoubtedly had some impact on the Soviet leadership, particularly since they must have viewed with alarm our earlier demonstrated willingness to fight for so long and so far from our own borders (an example of what Lenin would have called naked imperialism at its most blatant).

The problem for the Army's leadership is that, by the end of the Vietnam War, the American people had begun to believe Lenin more than their own leaders. David Halberstam's thesis, were he to state it, is that our belief that we could and should project our military might so far away in such an inappropriate arena for conventional forces was based on arrogance, if not imperialism. During the period when Americans and their leaders were becoming dissatisfied with this particular use of American military power,

military leadership in the United States was aware of the political pressures which brought important segments of both the Republican and Democratic parties to support the all-volunteer force. . . . Nixon used his call for a volunteer force as a device to indicate his desire to end the war in Vietnam. He had also been influenced

by economists such as Milton Friedman, who claimed that an all-volunteer force would be more efficient.<sup>1</sup>

Erwin Hückel concurs:

Half of the young men may be willing or even eager to serve, but if only small part of the other half prove to be unwilling or recalcitrant recruits the cost in terms of political and military discontent and turbulence may be so high as to outweigh any possible benefits. It is this reasoning which has influenced to a large extent the decision of the United States Administration to seek the abolition of conscription. In terms of domestic political turmoil the use of conscripted manpower by the French forces in Algeria and by the United States forces in Vietnam turned out to be a disastrous blunder. . . . Conscript forces--and through them their governments--are much more vulnerable to political dissension than volunteer forces.<sup>2</sup>

The significance of an all-volunteer Army, however, is not just the avoidance of political dissension when it is used. Rather it is, inferentially and actually, a qualitative and quantitative constraint on the force structure of the Army. In his chapter on "Problems of Personnel Recruitment" Hückel says that getting the best possible men in sufficient numbers is "at bottom an insoluble task."<sup>3</sup> In 1972 Morris Janowicz, a noted commentator on the military, foresaw the total Department of Defense active military strength as 1.75 million for 1975.<sup>4</sup> He argues in another article that:

the original estimate [2.0 to 2.5 million for the Department of Defense] of the Gates Commission [commissioned by the

---

<sup>1</sup>Morris Janowicz, The US Forces and the Zero Draft, Adelphi Papers No. 94 (London: Institute for Strategic Studies, Jan 73), p. 6.

<sup>2</sup>Erwin Hückel, Military Manpower and Political Purpose, Adelphi Papers No. 72 (London: Institute for Strategic Studies, Dec70), p. 24.

<sup>3</sup>Ibid., p. 6.

<sup>4</sup>Janowicz, "Volunteer Armed Forces and Military Purpose," Foreign Affairs, April 72, pp. 427-443.

President to determine the feasibility of an all-volunteer force <sup>7</sup> appears much too high if the military budget is to be kept near 7 per cent <sup>7</sup> of the Gross National Product <sup>7</sup>, let alone reduced. Increasing unit personnel costs, the tremendous projected increase in the cost of military retirement for personnel no longer on active duty, and the rising cost of new weapons result in unending pressure to limit active duty manpower. The major reduction will, of course, be in the ground force, since further contractions in the size of the naval and air forces are very difficult to accomplish.<sup>5</sup>

Although the actual figures of more than 2.1 million active military manpower and 6 per cent of the Gross National Product indicate that the Gates Commission was more accurate than Janowicz, both figures suggest that the problems of recruiting an all-volunteer force have never been taken lightly. In fact, although the Army's leadership

believed that time would change the nation's perceptions of the military profession and that the volunteer Army would eventually succeed, Congress was convinced that a smaller sized Army was what the no-draft environment would support. It was not until the very end of 1973 that we could see that an Army of about 785,000 was feasible in the near term. <sup>7</sup>We<sup>7</sup> also perceived that an Army much greater than that size was not likely to be supported by Congress. In any event what the Army needed immediately was stability in manpower size to allow it to shake off the adverse effects of continual reductions.<sup>6</sup>

Essentially, then, the decision to opt for an all-volunteer force--prompted, as have been so many other decisions about national security, by the unpopularity of the Vietnam war--in combination with the desire to restrict the Defense Budget to 6 per cent of the Gross National Product has produced one relatively firm constraint, an Army of no more than 785,000.

There have been other external factors which have also acted as constraints on how the Army structures its 785,000 spaces.

---

<sup>5</sup>Janowicz, The US Forces and the Zero Draft, p. 7.

<sup>6</sup>Weyand, unpublished letter, 17 April 75.

These constraints can be seen more clearly if we consider the question asked by Senator Strom Thurmond this year when the 16 division force was submitted to Congress as the programmed force:

The Army has been supported by the Secretary of Defense to have a stable force of 785,000. I want to ask you this. Is there a requirement for 785,000 people, or is there a requirement for 16 divisions? If the Congress did not approve a 16 division force, then I feel sure that some will conclude that a personnel reduction from the 785,000 level would be justified. Personally, I would be very concerned if we went below 785,000. And I just wondered how you would care to rationalize this matter so that the public would understand the position of the Army in connection with it.<sup>7</sup>

One answer to that question might be "yes." That is, each figure supports the other, or rather each is an incentive for the other:

The decision that the United States should add Army divisions to its force structure also depended on factors other than evaluations of the military balance in Europe, and possible simultaneous needs for combat forces elsewhere in the eventuality of such a conflict. One such consideration is whether the Army could have been induced to move toward greater manpower efficiencies without the incentive of more combat units. Past experience does not provide grounds for great optimism on this score.<sup>8</sup>

more specifically, "Manpower efficiency is generally measured by the ratio of manpower in combat units to manpower in support elements, more popularly termed the relationship of 'teeth to tail.'" This perceived "inefficiency in the utilization of manpower has been discussed extensively in previous editions of Setting National Priorities and elsewhere" [notably: Martin, Binkin, Support Costs in the Defense Budget: The Submerged One-Third (Washington: Brookings

---

<sup>7</sup>U.S., Congress, Senate, Committee on Armed Services, US Military Posture and Procurement for FY 1976, Hearing, 94th Congress, 1st Sess., 7 Feb 75 (Washington: Government Printing Office, 1975), pp. 234-235.

<sup>8</sup>Barry M. Blechman, et al, Setting National Priorities: The 1975 Budget (Washington: The Brookings Institution, 1974), p. 127.

Institution, 1972)<sup>9</sup> 7. The influence of Congressional concern with the tooth to tail ratio as an index of the efficient use of manpower is easily confirmed by this excerpt from the Army briefing document for this year's hearings:

Congress, during these last two years, has been specific in its guidance to (1) eliminate unessential support functions and overhead, (2) increase combat capability, and (3) save money. We have explained that we require stable manpower levels to be successful. The Congress has tacitly agreed and throughout has supported us. Now, we are on the verge of realizing the most important benefit of all: optimum combat power for the size of the force.<sup>10</sup>

Accompanying this portion of the briefing is a chart (see next page) which details eight Congressional reports or acts which guide the Army toward greater manpower efficiency. Whether the Army's actual manpower efficiencies enumerated in subsequent charts are the result of Congressional pressure or of Army initiatives is probably a moot question, but in any case the Army's leaders know where the favorable terrain is. A cynical observer might say that this is a device, a smokescreen, but if it works it is because the wind is blowing in the right direction.

One final index of how important Congressional perceptions of the tooth to tail ratio can be is the passing of the Nunn Amendment in August of 1974. As the chart on the next page states, it requires the Department of Defense to reduce "non-combat US military elements in Europe by 18,000 men. Secretary of Defense authorized to replace these with equivalent number of combat forces." A recent study by two students, Captains Wesley Clark and James R. Golden, at the

---

<sup>9</sup>Ibid., p. 100

<sup>10</sup>Department of the Army. "The Army of 1976" (Op. Cit.), 18 Feb 75, p. 4.

# *4 Army Manpower Efficiency* **CONGRESSIONAL GUIDANCE**

SASC REPORT  
92-962

"MANPOWER EFFICIENCIES IN SUPPORTING ACTIVITIES CAN  
BE REALIZED..."

HAC REPORT  
92-1389

"THE COMMITTEE EXPECTS TO SEE MILITARY PERSONNEL OUT FROM  
BEHIND DESKS..."

HASC REPORT  
93-383

"THE END STRENGTH FOR FY 74 MARKS THE ARRIVAL OF THE  
'BASE LINE FORCE'..."

HAC REPORT  
93-662

"THE MISSION OF THE DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE IS... TO MAINTAIN  
STRONG COMBAT FORCES."

SASC REPORT  
93-617

"... PROVIDE THE MOST DEFENSE FOR THE SMALLEST OUTLAYS."

HASC REPORT  
93-1035

"THE COMMITTEE APPLAUDS REDUCING HEADQUARTERS STAFFING..."

MIL AUTH ACT  
PL 93-365

SEC. 302(a): REQUIRES THE REDUCTION OF NON-COMBAT US MILITARY  
ELEMENTS IN EUROPE BY 18,000 MEN. SECRETARY OF DEFENSE AUTHORIZED  
TO REPLACE THESE WITH EQUIVALENT NUMBER OF COMBAT FORCES.

HOUSE JOINT  
CONF REPORT  
93-1363

"THERE IS A NEED FOR STRONG INCENTIVES TO ENCOURAGE THE SERVICES  
TO ACHIEVE EFFICIENCIES..."

Command and General Staff College argues persuasively that implementing those instructions (which enjoyed the strong approval of the Secretary of Defense) accelerates the conversion to 16 divisions to such an extent that it will cause significant personnel and materiel turbulence in the near future. Such turbulence, they point out, will cause appreciable degradation in the overall readiness posture of the entire 24 division (active and reserve) force.<sup>11</sup> To continue the earlier analogy, the winds, while favorable, have suddenly reached gale force. The reason why such a precipitous action gained the imprimatur of both the Secretary of the Army and the Secretary of Defense is that it effectively forestalled a Mansfield Amendment to reduce unilaterally the forward deployed forces of the NATO contingency. Those forces, when withdrawn from Europe, would have had very little chance of avoiding deactivation.

We can conclude our examination of constraints by noting that the one real constraint was the manpower ceiling of 785,000, which was essentially caused by the perceived ability of the Army to recruit an all-volunteer force. Even this is no longer as potent as it once was. The recession and the sound of falling dominoes could very possibly lead to a larger Army. For the present, however, the Army intends to use these factors to improve the quality and the length of service (from two to three years) of future accessions. If the force is enlarged (to 830,000, for example), the current Secretary of Defense would want the Army to examine the feasibility of adding two more divisions.<sup>12</sup> Surely this reveals how pervasive

---

<sup>11</sup> Clark and Golden, "The Sixteen Division Force: An Analysis of the Force Development Process in Practice(U)" (Unpublished term paper for an elective course in Force Development), 6 Mar 75, p. 28.

is the influence of the tooth to tail index.

Whether the tooth to tail ratio is a constraint depends on the point of view. To Congress, to the civilian secretaries, and to the Army's leadership it seems to have been a cooperative venture:

Faced with an improving Soviet conventional force and a real limitation on the size of the active Army but encouraged by the initial successes of headquarters reductions, [General Abrams] stated his objective of fielding three more active divisions over a period of years without the support units previously considered essential. He broached his plan to the Secretary of the Army and Secretary of Defense and received enthusiastic support from both. The Congressional impressions that the Army was too support heavy were not the driving force, but [General Abrams] perceived those impressions as an opportunity to present a program for major conversions of that support manpower into combat units.<sup>13</sup>

As we shall see, acceptance of reconfiguring in favor of combat units incurs some risks. Nevertheless, one alternative, a capital intensive force of 11 divisions, would have allowed Congress to reduce the manpower possibly to 690,000 without a complementary increase in procurement and research and development funds.<sup>14</sup>

---

<sup>12</sup>Schlesinger Interview, 18 April 75.

<sup>13</sup>Weyand Letter.

<sup>14</sup>Schlesinger Interview.



## CHAPTER IV

TROOPS AVAILABLE: MANAGERIAL AND TACTICAL  
CONSEQUENCES OF THE DECISION

Army Field Manual 61-100 states that in his estimate of the situation the commander must consider the troops available:

The capabilities of forces available must be evaluated before realistic plans can be made and action taken. The allocation of combat forces, fires, other combat support, and combat service support provides the commander with the means of developing combat power. The manner in which he organizes for combat and employs these forces determines the degree of combat power that will be developed. (15 Nov 68, p. 6-34)

The allocation of these resources, combat, combat support, and combat service support, is essentially a task of internal management. From the larger perspective of restructuring the resources, primarily manpower spaces, of the Army as a whole, the Secretary of Defense also feels that this should be internally managed. As Secretary of Defense, James R. Schlesinger's "grand strategy" has included establishing an Army manpower "floor" of 785,000 and then permitting the Army to "do as much as you can with it, up to the limit of our<sup>1</sup> military requirements." His intention has been to let them decide how to allocate those resources. The key to it all is that there is an incentive to be more efficient because manpower savings in one area could be applied to another, not cut by OSD. He perceives that this is different from the approaches of his predecessors,

---

<sup>1</sup>Schlesinger Interview, 18 April 75.

chiefly Robert McNamara, who were inclined to dictate what the force structure should be. He feels, for example, that McNamara's telling the Army that the optimum force was 16 divisions encouraged the creation of the Division Force Equivalent of 48,000 to justify an even larger end strength.<sup>2</sup> Because the number of divisions was the only constraint, there was no inducement to control the end strength or the budget request. That was to be controlled by a somewhat arbitrary system of cost effective analysis.

Not too surprisingly, General Abrams, who was beginning to see his way clear to being able to recruit a force of 785,000, found this "grand strategy" to be to his liking: "what the Army needed immediately was stability in manpower size to allow it to shake off the adverse effects of continual reductions."<sup>3</sup> Given that stability and the conviction that the realities of the world situation demanded more divisions, a means other than an increase in size had to be developed "before a decision on adding more divisions could be announced. That means was our ability to convert manpower from head-<sup>4</sup>quarters and support units into manpower for divisions."

This shared perspective between civilian and military leaders is not as simple as it appears. Essentially it compels the Army to manage its resources far more carefully than it ever has before;

The idea of 16 divisions was not new. As you stated, we had 16 in 1964 before the Vietnam buildup; our "objective" had been 16 for several years. I believe that no ideas in the Pentagon are really new. Much more important than the origin of

---

<sup>2</sup>Schlesinger Interview, 18 April 75.

<sup>3</sup>Ibid.

<sup>4</sup>Weyand Letter , 17 April 75.

the ideas was the ability to implement it. [General Abrams] turned the Army's thinking around. The amount of manpower needed was significant; about 26,000 manpower spaces to be converted from support. That required finding new ways of doing business and that is precisely what [General Abrams] told the staff to do. Had he not his three new divisions in mind, I'm sure that he would have given in to some of the very persuasive staff arguments against elimination of certain headquarters and DA Staff elements.<sup>5</sup>

Perhaps the staff had been reading the latest edition of Setting National Priorities:

Army spokesmen mention 16 divisions as an objective, the number maintained in fiscal 1964, but this may be overly ambitious. In our judgment, it seems feasible to add another 1 2/3 divisions by the end of fiscal 1980, bringing the total to 15, without significantly increasing total manpower or requiring unrealistic reductions in support functions. This would involve a shift of about 54,000 men from the support units to division forces (including initial support increments) after fiscal 1975 and would increase the percentage of total Army manpower in divisions to 30.5 percent--a modest goal compared to the 80 percent figure characterizing the Soviet Army.<sup>6</sup>

It may also appear that the Army Staff has fallen prey to an ill which is implied by the Brookings Institution and which is addressed forthrightly by the Secretary of Defense:

It is also common to allege that the Defense Budget contains some inner momentum of its own, that it has a Parkinsonian tendency to expand independently of external threats (although the perceived growth is in current and highly inflated dollars). Few of us give ear to some of our most trenchant critics in Congress who acknowledge that the Department of Defense is the best managed in government.<sup>7</sup>

The problem perceived by the Army, however, is a real one. Internal restructuring of the Army means that Army planners and decision-

---

<sup>5</sup>Ibid.

<sup>6</sup>Barry M. Blechman, et al, Setting National Priorities: The 1975 Budget (Washington: The Brookings Institution, 1974), p. 78.

<sup>7</sup>James R. Schlesinger, Annual Defense Department Report, FY 1976 and 1977 (Washington: Dept of Defense, 5 Feb 75), p. I-3.

makers must make some hard choices. It is not simply a matter of turning fat into muscle;

Manpower efficiency is generally measured by the ratio of manpower in combat units to manpower in support elements, more popularly termed the relationship of "teeth to tail." The analogy is somewhat misleading. "Tail" or support elements should not automatically be equated with inefficiency. The rifleman on the frontlines must be recruited, paid, fed, clothed, and kept healthy; his equipment must be acquired, stocked, maintained, and repaired. These functions require support units. Compared to the situation in the 1950s, the new technologies and resulting greater capability of US general purpose forces, the higher state of readiness in which military units are now maintained, and the improvements in military living conditions all quite legitimately required a shift in the balance between combat and support manpower. The question is whether this shift has gone too far.<sup>8</sup>

One might think that the Brookings Institution had read General Abrams' testimony before Congress, for, on the same day he indicated his intention to attain 16 divisions, he took care to explain why such a restructuring would not be easy:

In that regard, there was much debate last year on what is popularly known as the teeth-to-tail ratio, that is, the ratio of combat to support forces. First of all, we should not confuse "fat" with "tail." To equate a support structure with "fat" is misleading. "Fat," as I see it, smacks of inefficiency or unnecessary redundancy. It can appear at any level--combat elements themselves are not immune from it. The real issue is how much support does a combat force need? Everyone agrees it needs some--the man with a rifle must be fed and clothed and paid and kept healthy and transported and so on. But we find disagreement when we ask just how much is enough. The answer is influenced by scores of factors, and has never been answered to the complete satisfaction of anyone. However, we must try. My job is to produce an efficient Army. I sincerely applaud efforts to ferret out unnecessary functions or redundant staffing, and I assure you the process is far from finished.

To get a handle on the teeth-to-tail problem it helps me to take a fundamental look at how the Army is put together. It has three interrelated parts. First are those forces, both combat and support, which are earmarked to implement the Army's assigned missions. We have some disputes on the composition of this part although our terms of reference or understanding are

---

<sup>8</sup>Blechman, Op.Cit., p. 100

relatively straightforward; it relates specific forces to specific tasks. If we were to be ordered to carry out our various missions right now, at once and be done with it, most of our teeth-to-tail debates would be eliminated. But, though we must always have a warfighting capability, our primary role is deterrence. Which means we have to support the fighting Army in peacetime while it is standing ready to fight. And that requires a second part which is needed to sustain the first one.

.....

Summing all of that up, we need forces ready to do whatever has to be done, other forces to sustain them while they are waiting to do it, and still others devoted to preparing for the future. In terms of teeth and tail, the only place you will find teeth is in a portion of the first part, the fighting Army. But we would have a poor excuse for an Army if it weren't for the other two parts. We must always strive to become more effective by removing "fat," but that is not the same as saying the Army can be made better merely by cutting its non-combat elements. The fact is, ill-considered cuts in the support forces are paid for with the lives of fighting men during the early stages of a conflict.<sup>9</sup>

A year later the Army is saying the same thing to Congress:

One of our most difficult challenges is to strike the right balance between combat and support forces for peacetime. In time of war, support force requirements actually are much larger than combat force requirements. Later, when the Army decreases in size, combat forces must come out first because it is more difficult to close posts, arsenals, depots, and hospitals--and more difficult to reduce the training and operating functions which largely make up support. We have brought these things back into balance for peacetime now, and our useable active combat force is climbing relative to active support forces. I want to emphasize that we are not saying that in time of war we won't need additional support forces. We are saying that in time of peace we must put our money on useable, visible, combat power as a deterrence.<sup>10</sup>

Given these perceptions by the Army's leaders, it is not surprising to discover some internal resistance to General Abrams' initiatives.

---

<sup>9</sup>U.S., Congress, House, Subcommittee of the Committee on Appropriations, Department of Defense Appropriations for 1975, Hearing, 93d Congress, 2d Sess., 5 March 74, (Washington: Government Printing Office, 1974), pp. 638-9

<sup>10</sup>Department of the Army, "The Army of 1976" (Op.Cit.), p. 3.

Another way of understanding that internal resistance is to examine the tactical consequences of the 16 division force. Interestingly, it is configured to accomplish roughly what a German analyst felt an all-volunteer force should do:

From the national point of view, all-volunteer forces offer mobility, flexibility and firepower at the cost not only of heavy per capita financial expenditure but also of a shortage of reserves and a partially consequent weakness in combat endurance and 'ground-holding' potential. They are thus more appropriate to nations with diverse or widely-scattered commitments, which may involve limited operations by highly trained task forces or which can back up their conventional capability by a credible threat of escalation to a nuclear level, than they are to nations whose primary concern is the conventional defence of continental territory against threats which may enforce prolonged combat.<sup>11</sup>

Four years later that is the way the Brookings Institution sees

"The New Look in Defense:"

The shift clearly reflects greater emphasis within the Defense Department on planning for an intense conflict of several weeks' duration in Europe rather than a longer war. Many have long argued for such a move, based mainly on the appraisal that Soviet forces were structured to gain a quick victory. The administration now seems to have accepted the thesis that the first thirty days of a conflict in Europe are likely to be decisive.<sup>12</sup>

This year the Army is saying the same thing to Congress:

The United States today faces potential adversaries around the world whose military capabilities have changed. Additionally, the country today must be prepared for adventurism and aggression in locations other than those traditionally associated with our vital interests. Thus, if we are to achieve our first purpose, which is deterrence, our forces must be reconfigured to counter a potential enemy's most likely course of action in these new circumstances. Failing deterrence, we must be able to react quickly and forcefully, and succeed early on in the hostilities. Without such early success, we will find containment of the conflict much more costly and difficult,

---

<sup>11</sup>Erwin Hückel, Op.Cit., p. 30.

<sup>12</sup>Blechman, Op.Cit., p. 93.

and negotiations more difficult to initiate.

If we recall (from page 4) that 26 of the 40 support increments which would be required for a somewhat longer conflict than described above are in the reserves, then the current request before Congress to be able to "call-up" 50,000 reservists without declaring national mobilization can be seen as a hedge against the limited support capabilities of the 16 division force. Clearly, the Army's leaders are concerned about how reduced combat service support can influence the tactics of the next battle--it is, after all, part of the "troops available" factor in the commander's estimate of the situation. Another source of amelioration could be the studies now being made of the Division Force Equivalent, which began as a rough planning figure, but which has now been with the Army planners long enough to acquire a kind of legitimacy that civilian leaders like Secretary Schlesinger see as contributing to that aforementioned "Parkinsonian tendency to expand independently."

Tooth to tail is not the only factor, however, which could affect the tactical employment of the 16 division force. Captains Clark and Golden, like Lieutenant Colonels Bradford and Brown before them, have expressed concern about the lightness of the new divisions, all of which will be infantry (rather than mechanized  
<sup>14</sup> infantry or armored). The 1973 October War demonstrated very convincingly that the high intensity combat environment of the future will make mincemeat of the kind of light divisions we used in Vietnam,

---

<sup>13</sup>Department of the Army, "The Army of 1976" (Op.Cit.), p. 5.

<sup>14</sup>Clark and Golden, Op.Cit., pp. 29-31.

for example. The most telling aspect of the October War is that Egyptians and Syrians had very lethal weapons. Initially they were very successful against Israeli tanks and jet fighters, the same weapons which had dominated the 1967 War.<sup>15</sup> Captains Clark and Golden conclude that perhaps the light divisions are a "foot in the door approach,"<sup>16</sup> that eventually they can be converted to mechanized or armored.

Possible tactical shortcomings of the 16 division force, however, are not the most critical aspect of the decision to attain them. Rather it is the challenge of implementing the changes to the force structure, of "finding new ways of doing business." As stated earlier, it is not simply a matter of converting unneeded headquarters, although the previously cited Congressional briefing document ("The Army of 1976") employs no less than six charts in detailing how those conversions are being effected. There have been other moves afoot. One of the most prominent is the Affiliation Program, which affiliates Reserve Brigades and battalions with Active Army divisions far more meaningfully than the Army had ever done before. Each of the three new divisions, for example, will have only two active Army brigades. The third brigade of each of these divisions will be a reserve unit with reserve maneuver battalions. Other CONUS active Army divisions will add on affiliated reserve battalions when they deploy, and in some instances they may add on a fourth brigade (also affiliated reserve). This program has

---

<sup>15</sup>The Insight Team of the London Sunday Times, The Yom Kippur War, (Garden City: Doubleday and Co, 1974), pp. 141-2 and 184-5.

<sup>16</sup>Clark and Golden, Op.Cit., p. 36.



two advantages from the efficiency perspective: portions of the deployable CONUS base will be manned by reserves, who are far less expensive than active Army personnel; and, because of their deployable status, these affiliated reserve units will gain access to training and materiel resources previously unavailable to them. The one major disadvantage to such a program cannot be precisely calculated: How well can they fight?

There are two other areas, relatively minor in terms of actual savings, which demonstrate the pervasiveness of the Army's effort to manage resources. The first is one-station training, which began as an effort simply to train soldiers better by not making them move from station to station to complete their individual (Basic Combat Training and Advanced Individual Training) training. The Training and Doctrine Command (TRADOC) had discovered that recruits underwent a letdown between stations and that the later training consequently was less effective and took longer than it should. What the manpower managers also discovered was that one-station training saved manpower spaces in training instructors, as well as in those spaces which are part of a "holding account" for personnel who are transient (trainees, students, medical evacuees, etc.), that is, not in a unit. The second example is one of saving, or rather managing, money, not people. Battalion commanders are currently given some form (it varies from division to division) of a checkbook monetary account, from which they get funds to "buy" repair parts. The point to this exercise is to make the dollar value of repair parts more visible to the commander, the manager who uses those parts to maintain the readiness of his unit. It is not unlike

the new Army Ration Card System, which requires the dining steward to "buy" rations from an account funded according to the number of people he feeds.

These little fiscal efficiencies, most of which preceded the decision to attain sixteen divisions, are not as unrelated to that decision as they may seem. As was stated earlier, one of the factors which affected that decision was that in an all-volunteer, labor-intensive Army, the people in the Army are its most expensive resource. Thus how they are managed is not solely dependent on how easily the Army can go out and recruit more. It is also a vital aspect of the Army's budget. With the rising cost of manpower--caused not only by inflation and the requirement for pay comparability with the civilian sector, but also by the steady escalation of retirement costs, which are of increasing concern for the Congress and retirees alike--a relatively stable Army budget brings considerable pressure to bear on all the other resources of the Army. The argument for a capital-intensive force, for example, is derived precisely from this aspect: if it is the Army's budget, rather than its manpower level, which can be stabilized (in "constant," uninflated dollars) for a period of time, then reducing the manpower level will produce budgetary savings which can be used to develop, procure, and maintain better equipment for the Army. Essentially this position was advocated by Secretary Schlesinger's predecessor, Melvin Laird, who made "technological superiority" a keynote of his FY 1973 Annual Defense Department Report to the Congress:

Therefore, in order to avoid that unacceptable danger, it is absolutely essential that we maintain technological superiority. The one billion dollar increase in the FY 1973 R&D Budget over

that which Congress gave us last year is aimed at maintaining that superiority.<sup>17</sup>

Secretary Schlesinger's view, on the other hand, is that force structure and readiness are far more useful to the Army, both militarily and politically. He sees capital vs. labor intensive as a nice theoretical argument, but not as particularly relevant to the harder reality of manning a front or presenting a program to Congress. Especially in the case of the Army, he feels that certain members of Congress are easily inclined to cut R&D and Procurement because all they do is "buy nice shiny toys for the Army."<sup>18</sup> The difference between these two approaches is essentially one of emphasis. Melvin Laird also advocated "better utilization of people"

In a recent Defense Management Journal article subtitled "High Costs Demand Redirection of R&D effort," the Assistant Secretary of the Army for Research and Development, Norman R. Augustine, presents an interesting discussion on how to manage capital assets in a labor-intensive force. He notes first a 1916 study by a British engineer, F. W. Lanchester, who "showed that to match a foe with twice as many weapons as one's own, one must possess weapons not of twice the the quality of the enemy's but rather four times the quality."<sup>19</sup> Noting that the "cost of a division is the cost of a division," whether it is lightly or heavily equipped, he nevertheless emphasizes that they need not be "gold-plated divisions,"<sup>20</sup> He asks, then, how "does one tell when the point of design ingenuity has been surpassed and

---

<sup>18</sup>Schlesinger Interview, 18 April 75.

<sup>19</sup>Augustine, "One Plane, One Tank, One Ship: Trend for the Future?" DMJ, Vol. 11, No. 2, April 75, 36.

<sup>20</sup>Ibid., p. 38.

and the point of undue sophistication approached?" The solution he proposes sounds a little like Secretary Schlesinger's "grand strategy:"

The yearly cost of inflation in the "people" part of the DOD budget is now of the same order of magnitude as the total amount being spent on research and development. It would thus appear that there are enormous gains to be made from devoting R&D dollars directly to reducing the manpower demands associated with performing a given mission, rather than simply to increasing hardware effectiveness as has generally been the case in the past. . . .

In the past, efforts to trade more effective equipment for manpower have not been notably successful. Perhaps one reason for this is that the net result of such proposed trades was usually to reduce overall manpower strength in the Services. Justifiable concern was thereby raised as to the potential consequences of equipment failure if we were to become so heavily dependent upon hardware, especially when that hardware is available in such limited quantities.

Secretary Schlesinger, on the other hand, has found a very effective means of overcoming this problem in an analogous area, that of reducing the size of headquarters. In this latter instance he has directed the military services to reduce the size of their overhead structure but, this time, the guidance is that, in general, for each man saved in a headquarters the service may add a man in a combat unit. As a direct consequence of this policy the Army, for example, is moving toward a leaner, tougher fighting force of 16 divisions rather than the prior 13 divisions, all within the same manpower end strength. This same policy, were it to be applied within the materiel process, could produce correspondingly great benefits.<sup>22</sup>

Clearly Mr. Augustine is also trying to find the most favorable terrain on which he can defend R&D. What it means is finding one more new way of doing business.

Finding new ways to do business within a context of budgetary restraints, roughly a stable \$25 billion for the Army, is a major preoccupation of the entire Army staff. The Army has also had to request an additional \$2.5 billion over the next five years to pay for basing and equipping the new divisions. They have also

<sup>21</sup>Ibid., p. 37.

<sup>22</sup>Ibid., p. 39.

requested, we should hasten to add, additional funds for R&D and Procurement. Nevertheless, the squeeze is on, perhaps only to be alleviated by the sound of falling dominoes.

There are two more, interrelated issues in the Army's effort to manage its resources in implementing the decision to go to 16 divisions. Those issues are time and readiness. The Clark and Golden study devotes considerable space and insight to an examination of the impact of the restructuring on the readiness of the Army. The original plan called for the 16 division force to be attained over a period of four years. The Nunn Amendment halved that: the new plan is to attain 16 divisions by the end of FY 1976. Their conclusion, which we noted earlier, was that the new plan cannot avoid considerable short-term personnel shortages and turbulence, materiel shortages and degraded maintenance, and, very possibly, an adverse effect on morale.<sup>24</sup> Only part of the problem is money. Another part of it is contained within the euphemism, "manpower spaces," which, it turns out, are actually people. When manpower spaces are converted from support to combat, people have to find new jobs or, more specifically, new Military Occupational Specialties. 785,00 may be stabilized, but many thousand people will not be.

---

<sup>23</sup> Department of the Army, "The Army of 1976," Chart 22.

<sup>24</sup> Clark and Golden, Op.Cit., pp. 22-28.

## CHAPTER V

## ASSESSMENT

Not very far into my research, I discovered a series of chicken-or-the-egg questions which were never answered satisfactorily: which was more important, 785,000 end strength, or 16 divisions? Which was more important, the threat, or Congress? Would the caveats, the problems encountered in attaining 16 divisions, overcome the original decision and demand that the Army's leaders compromise, perhaps as the Brookings people suggest, at 15 divisions and 785,000 men? Given these imponderables, this study is an effort to separate and analyze the most important factors involved in the original decision, particularly by using the factors of METT as a rough analogy, familiar to the military reader and decision-maker alike, to those factors. What is now clear, however, is that there are very few verities in deciding what the Army's share of an adequate National Defense is. By themselves, for example, 785,000 end strength and 16 divisions carry with them very demonstrable and persuasive rationales. Putting them together, however, is what brings us to the "crunch." As the Clark and Golden study demonstrates, and as I hope my last two chapters also show, these two elements are not readily miscible. Nor is it enough to say that they only needed a catalyst like General Abrams to make their chemistry work. It would be truer to say that such a catalyst was needed even to attempt the new mixture.

From a larger perspective it would be misleading to see General

Abrams as a catalyst in a kind of elixir for the National Defense ills which have beset the nation as well as the Army. Not only has the chemical reaction not been completed to the extent that its results are clear, but there are other forces at work. The Nunn Amendment has, on the one hand, speeded up the process, probably too quickly, but what seems to have been the alternative of continued unilateral force reductions and erosions in the Defense Budget was even more unacceptable. The current state of the FY 1976 Budget, and of the concomitant request to approve and fund the 16 division force, with respect to the 94th Congress is impossible to assess, particularly since the internal economic pressures and the perturbations from the international scene are not complementary forces. Although it is considered axiomatic that nothing is ever final in the budgeting process, the FY 1976 edition will undoubtedly be more decisive than most. Given the sound of falling dominoes and the current reticence of Tel Aviv, however, let us assume that the Army gets what it asked for: an adequate budget of about \$24.6 billion, an end strength of 785,000 (to become 793,000), and approval of a program to attain 16 divisions, part of which will be composed of affiliated reserve brigades and battalions.

What, then, might be the advantages and disadvantages of this consummation so devoutly to be wished? Strategically, one would find it difficult to argue that our forces would be perceived to be weakened by having more divisions. As the briefing document, "The Army of 1976," posits, "in time of peace we must put our money on useable, visible, combat power as a deterrence."<sup>1</sup> That some of

---

<sup>1</sup>Department of the Army, "The Army of 1976" (Op.Cit.), p. 3.

those divisions have affiliated reserve units and less active Army support increments to sustain them in a long war would not impress the overwhelming majority of other nations' armed forces, who depend on such "savings" far more than we do. The strategic issue of technological superiority remains to be settled, although it should be noted that a 16 division force does not preclude our retaining that edge in the ground forces arena. Finally, we should note that, given the past history of negotiations with the Soviet Union, unilateral increases in our perceived force structure can only help Mutual and Balanced Force Reductions negotiations, particularly since two-thirds of a division are being added to the NATO commitment.

With respect to Congress, it is also difficult to argue that attaining 16 divisions within an established manpower ceiling and by cutting not only "fat" but also the much-maligned support structure, could be construed by them as defiant of the best interests of the nation. The one real risk is that they would be convinced by the Army's efforts to reduce the support, but not by the argument that those savings should be put into more divisions. This would result in 13 divisions with less support--sort of an Army version of the Air Force's "BACKFIRE."

Given these estimations of principal gains in the arenas of international stature and national priorities, what of the more mundane aspects of tactical employment and of managing resources to attain the greatest efficiency (to include maintaining readiness, which has been so hard to attain since the drawdown from Vietnam)? As we have already cited General Abrams as saying to Congress, there are no easy choices here, and the costs can be very high. As he



himself stated in his first appearance before Congress as the Army Chief of Staff--after he related that, in his experience, the Army paid a fearful price for overly optimistic reductions in forces preceding World War II and Korea--"We have always done most of the dying."<sup>2</sup> If deterrence fails and if Congressional constraints on manpower and support structure have resulted from perceptions which are grossly in error, the people in those 16 divisions will make up the cost-effective differential in blood--to say nothing of the cost to the nation if the next war is actually lost.

The most critical question, then, would seem to be whether 16 divisions is more efficient, whether it would fight better than would, for example, a capital intensive force of fewer divisions, but which would be "heavier" (mechanized or armored) and would have a more adequate support structure. We have already noted that there are some real risks involved in entering the projected combat environment of the future (or even now) with "light" divisions, lightly supported. Balanced against these risks, however, are the following: with no significant increase in the strategic mobility assets available to project those divisions where they will be needed, lighter divisions can be moved much more quickly than heavy divisions. Further, the forward-deployed divisions in Europe are already "heavy" and part of the divisions in CONUS which can expect to reinforce them also are "heavy." There is also the often-expressed conviction these days that perhaps the tank, the key element in

---

<sup>2</sup>U.S., Congress, House, Subcommittee of the Committee on Appropriations, Department of Defense Appropriations for 1974, Hearings, 93d Congress, 1st Sess. (Washington: Government Printing Office, Mar 73), p. 687.

"heavy" forces, is not as viable as it once was. The Egyptians, for example, overcame the over-zealous initial tank charges of the Israelis with "suitcase Sappers," pre-eminently infantry, "light" weapons much like our own Dragon, TOW and LAW.

The consequences of fighting with a reduced support structure, however, are far more difficult to assess, as General Abrams attested to last year before Congress. We have always used a great deal of "tail" because we have projected our ground forces farther, for longer periods, and with less reliance on our allies than any other nation since modern weaponry and warfare have evolved. We also dislike casualties more than most other peoples, and support demonstrably reduces casualties. Nevertheless, it is also clear to anyone who fought in Vietnam that our most recent experience is not a good index of how much support is enough--there we had too much. Secondly, there is clearly a need to reassess the Division Force Equivalent figure of 48,000, which began only as a rough planning figure. Finally, there is the question of whether it is not more sensible to put support increments rather than combat forces in the reserves? That is, should not the active Army be primarily concerned with the "combat mission?"

This brings us to the question of what is the chief business of the active Army? Clearly it is preparing for its mission, which is fighting. The key element of preparing for combat is readiness: manning and equipping our divisions; developing and procuring the best possible equipment; training our people so that they are as ready and as good as the equipment; ensuring that their morale will sustain the mission of fighting (and dying). To repeat the conclusions

of the Clark and Golden study, for the short term all of these factors of readiness will be, as they already are, degraded. This degradation has been exacerbated by the acceleration of the program from doing it in four years to doing it in two. The equipment and maintenance problems are the most severe and the longest lasting, but the one most evident to the Army as a whole is morale. It is not just the people involved in changing MOS's. It is also the fact that budget limitations are bringing greater pressures to bear on the "second part" of the Army referred to by General Abrams--the part that "sustains" the mission forces, especially in peacetime. What the Army members perceive is not economy, nor efficient management of resources, nor even requisite sacrifices, but, rather, "erosion of benefits." Because of the Vietnam experience and the pay raises since 1967, austerity is a new concept for a sizable portion of the Army's people, particularly since it attacks those benefits (retirement, commissary, and medical care for dependents) which have always sustained Army morale. The point of this line of reasoning is not that the 16 division force is closing commissaries or cutting retirement benefits--these were probably inevitable--but that internally 16 divisions will be seen as cutting into the support structure (in its entirety) to which we have become accustomed. In the long run, however, austerity and more intensive management of resources can only be healthier for the Army, provided they are accomplished with some restraint. Since the pendulum is at rest only in the extreme, such restraint is probably unlikely.

In summary we might assess the 16 division force decision as a positive response to the strategic exigencies of the current

world situation and as complementary to the desires of both the Congress and the Department of Defense to increase the tooth to tail ratio. There is also reason to believe that 16 divisions are tactically as employable as would be an alternative capital intensive force of fewer divisions. From a short term perspective of readiness posture, however, there are some very real risks, particularly in trying to attain 16 divisions by the end of FY 1976. Because readiness is such a vital aspect of our military posture--indeed, as Clark and Golden point out, stabilizing the end strength at 785,000 was intended to benefit readiness--these risks are significant. Nevertheless, in the current realities of shifting national priorities and incipient international challenges, it is better to take some risks, to assert some sense of initiative, than to allow the structure of the Army to be decided "in a casual and impulsive fashion over a period of time."

#### AFTERTHOUGHT

There are two critical elements of the 16 division force decision which the preceding discussion does not really address. These two elements, the time and the man, are alluded to and even cited; but what is missing is the drama of the interplay between them. In February, 1973 when the man, General Abrams, made his first appearance before Congress as the Army Chief of Staff and talked of how the Army has "always done most of the dying," he also spoke of the particular units, notably the 24th Infantry Division in Korea, which were thrown in to buy time for America to gird itself for war. The problem, of course, is that the Army in

particular has always been drastically drawn down after a war because, not only is it perceived to be no longer vitally necessary, but also because the nation is tired of war. Given this inevitability, the 16 division force can be seen as a kind of retrograde operation to delay or even to stop that drawdown so that the building back will not take so long and will have a more useful structure to build upon. It is intended to buy time to build back before hostilities begin. That time may be less than we would like to believe.

The uniqueness of the 16 division force decision is not derived solely from its kinship to a retrograde. Practically every important factor which impinged on the decision, for example, was in reality a "constraint;" the Soviet threat was a constraint (in past years it has been quite useful) because the nations's preoccupation with Vietnam caused us to ignore it or simply not to see it; the all-volunteer force was a constraint because it suggested, as did the War Powers Resolution, an underlying lack of resolve to respond to the threat; the Army itself was a constraint because its image was tarnished and its credibility eroded; the American image, probably for the first time in this century, was a constraint because the Paris truce arrangements for South Vietnam reinforced that lack of resolve; and even General Abrams' accession to Chief of Staff of the Army was a mixed blessing--his accession, one must remember, was delayed for two months while the Congress investigated his integrity in handling the General Lavelle affair. "Abe" was surrounded.

Lieutenant Colonel Abrams, however, was the World War II tank commander who once said, "They've got us surrounded again, the poor bastards!" I remember asking him sometime in the spring of 1973 what

he was going to do when the all-volunteer Army failed to accomplish all that it had to, or even fell flat on its face. He said that he'd been asked that question by some NCO's. He told them this story (he was always telling stories) about candor: a company commander in the midst of battle was receiving reports from his front, his flanks, and even his rear that the enemy was probing in strength. When a sergeant asked him whether they were surrounded and whether they might be wiped out, he answered, "In all candor, Sergeant, I've got to say that we are surrounded and that we could very well be wiped out." In another sector of the battlefield, another company commander was confronted by the same situation and asked the same questions. His answer was different: "I have to admit that they've got us surrounded, but it only means that they're getting to where we can kill more of them."

It was always in his nature to do as much as possible with what he had, but mainly, to do something. In September of 1969 when he had returned to Washington for meetings (war councils) with the President, it was already apparent that we were going to wind down the war with as few casualties as possible, that the future would bring a lengthy daylight retrograde operation. Yet he said that his purpose was to put maximum pressure on the enemy. During the two month hiatus before he became Chief of Staff, he once said that after his term was over he hoped he would be remembered, somewhat like Pope John XXIII, as a conservative, but also as one "who made the most changes." What John changed was everybody's thinking.

Perhaps the two most important things to remember about decisions are that they should be decisive, that is, that they

should provide initiative by pointing in a new direction, and that by themselves they are not solutions. Even the commander who decides upon a given course of action realizes that the implementation of that decision is what furnishes the "solution." As we have seen, the 16 division force decision gave the Army a new direction, but the solution is still up to the Army, its leaders, its Army Staff, and its members. As we have also noted, that implementation will not be easy. If it were easy, if 16 divisions were readily attainable, the "decision" to move the Army toward 16 divisions within the given manpower and budgetary constraints would not have had to be made.

## BIBLIOGRAPHY



## BIBLIOGRAPHY

## BOOKS

- Binkin, Martin. Support Costs in the Defense Budget: The Submerged One-Third. Washington: Brookings Institution, 1972.
- Blechman, Barry M., et al. Setting National Priorities: The 1974 Budget. Washington: Brookings Institution, 1974.
- Bradford, Zeb B. Jr, and Frederic J. Brown. The United States Army In Transition. Beverly Hills: Sage Publications, 1973.
- Fried, Edward R., et al. Setting National Priorities: The 1974 Budget. Washington: Brookings Institution, 1973.
- Gerhardt, James. The Draft and Public Policy: Issues in Military Manpower Procurement, 1945-1970. Columbus: Ohio State University Press, 1971.
- Hackel, Erwin. Military Manpower and Political Purpose. Adelphi Papers, No. 72. London: Institute for Strategic Studies, 1970.
- Halberstam, David. The Best and the Brightest. Greenwich, Conn.: Fawcett, Inc., 1969.
- Insight Team of the London Sunday Times. The Yom Kippur War. Garden City: Doubleday and Co, 1974.
- Janowicz, Morris. The US Forces and the Zero Draft. Adelphi Papers No. 94. London: Institute for Strategic Studies, 1973.
- Kim, K.H., Susan Farrel, and Ewen Clague. The All-Volunteer Army: An Analysis of Demand and Supply. New York: Praeger Publishers, 1971.
- Milton, John. Areopagitica. The Portable Milton, Edited by Douglas Bush. New York: The Viking Press, 1949.
- Newhouse, John. US Troops in Europe: Issues, Costs, and Choices. Washington: Brookings Institution, 1971.
- Schultze, Charles L., et al. Setting National Priorities: The 1973 Budget. Washington: Brookings Institute, 1972.
- Tarr, David W. American Strategy in the Nuclear Age. London: Macmillan Co, 1966.

## GOVERNMENT DOCUMENTS

Department of the Army. "Army Program Objectives Memorandum, FY FY 1976-1980 (U)." 1974.

Force Concepts and Design Directorate. Reevaluation of the 48,000 Structure Allocation Planning Factor Associated With the Division Force Equivalent Concept. DFE Study (Short Title). Bethesda: US Army Concepts Analysis Agency, Sep 74.

Gates, Thomas Chairman. The Report of the President's Commission on an All-Volunteer Armed Force. Washington: Government Printing Office, 1970.

Joint Chiefs of Staff. "Joint Strategic Objectives Plan (U)," Annex A, FY 72-79. 18 Feb 70.

Laird, Melvin. Annual Defense Department Report, FY 1973. Washington: Department of Defense, 1972.

Schlesinger, James R. "Address by the Honorable James R. Schlesinger, Secretary of Defense, Before National Security Industrial Association Dinner, Washington, Sep 20, 1974." Washington: Department of Defense, 1974.

\_\_\_\_\_. Annual Defense Department Report, FY 1975. Washington: Department of Defense, 1974.

\_\_\_\_\_. Annual Defense Department Report, FY 1976 and 1977. Washington: Department of Defense, 1975.

U.S. Congress. House. Subcommittee of the Committee on Appropriations. Department of Defense Appropriations for 1974. Hearings, 93d Congress, 1st Session. Washington: Government Printing Office, Mar 73. 687.

U.S. Congress. House. Subcommittee of the Committee on Appropriations. Department of Defense Appropriations for 1975. Hearings, 93d Congress, 2d Session, 5 March 74. Washington: Government Printing Office, 1974. 610 and 647-8.

U.S. Congress. Senate. Committee on Armed Services. US Military Posture and Procurement for FY 1976. Hearing, 94th Congress, 1st Session, 7 Feb 75. Washington: Government Printing Office, 1975. 234-5.

U.S. Congress. Senate. Subcommittee of the Committee on Appropriations. Department of Defense Appropriations for Fiscal Year 1975. Hearings, 93d Congress, 2d Session, 12 March 74. Washington: Government Printing Office, 1974. 37-45.

## PERIODICALS AND ARTICLES

Abrams, Creighton W. "Army, 1974: Emphasis Is on Readiness,"  
Army, Annual Green Book for 1974, 8-9.

\_\_\_\_\_. "The Will to Fight: Security and Detente." Speech delivered  
at the World Peace Luncheon, Birmingham, Alabama, 22 Oct 73.  
Vital Speeches of the Day: Vol XXXX, No. 4, 1 Dec 73, 122-3.

Augustine, Norman R. "One Plane, One Tank, One Ship: Trend for the  
Future?" Defense Management Journal, Vol 11, No. 2, 34-40.

Calloway, Howard H. "Volunteer Army, '74: A Gauntlet Picked Up,"  
Army, Annual Green Book for 1974, 14-16.

The Commission for Force Structure. "A New Structure for the German  
Armed Forces," Survival, Jan-Feb 73. A synopsis of a report  
originally published in Germany, Spring 71.

Janowicz, Morris. "Volunteer Armed Forces and Military Purpose,"  
Foreign Affairs, April 72, 427-43.

Schlesinger, James R. "Can Russia Be Trusted--Interview with James  
R. Schlesinger, Secretary of Defense, US News & World Report,  
13 May 1974, 38-44.

"What Every GI Secretly Suspected," Forbes, 15 Sep 74, 66.

## UNPUBLISHED MATERIAL

Clark, Wesley and James R. Golden. "The Sixteen Division Force:  
An Analysis of the Force Development Process in Practice (U),"  
Unpublished Term Paper for Course 2664, Command and General  
Staff College, Fort Leavenworth, Kansas, 6 Mar 75.

Department of the Army. "The Army of 1976: An Explanation of the  
Army's Force Initiatives and the Budgetary Implications for FY 76,"  
Unpublished Congressional briefing document, 18 Feb 75.

\_\_\_\_\_. "Memorandum for Chief of Staff, Army, Subject: Why a  
16 Division Army (U)," Unpublished Memorandum, 23 May 74.

\_\_\_\_\_. "Why 16 Divisions?" Unpublished Position Paper for  
Chief of Staff, Army.

Jones, George S. III. "The Risk Aspects of Force Level Recommendations."  
Unpublished US Army War College student essay, 7 Apr 67.

Weyand, Frederic C. Unpublished Letter about General Abrams' rationale  
for 16 division force, 17 April 75.

## OTHER SOURCES

Columbia Broadcasting System (CBS). 60 Minutes, 30 Mar 75.

Schlesinger, James R. Interview about the 16 division force rationale conducted 18 April 75.